

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 09842 010744Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8382

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 09842

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, PLOS, KS, JA

SUBJECT: TAKESHIMA/DOKTO AND CONTINENTAL SHELF
LEGISLATION

REF: A. SEOUL 4060; B. TOKYO 9783

1. APPEARING AS ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER BEFORE MAY 30
DIET COMMITTEE HEARING ON CONTINENTAL SHELF LEGISLATION,
PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA WAS ASKED SEVERAL QUESTIONS CONCERN-
ING RECENT FLARE-UP OF TAKESHIMA/DOKTO CONTROVERSY.
FUKUDA REAFFIRMED VALIDITY OF JAPAN'S LEGAL CLAIM TO
ISLANDS, BUT UNDERScoreD AT SAME TIME IMPORTANCE FOR JAPAN
OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH ROK AND NEED TO SETTLE PROBLEM
"PEACEFULLY". HE REPORTEDLY RESISTED OPPOSITION DEMANDS
THAT GOJ TAKE STRONGER DIPLOMATIC STEPS TO EMPHASIZE ITS
CLAIM.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MAY 31, NEA DIVDIR
EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH DEGREE TO WHICH BOTH GOVERN-
MENTS HAD BEEN ABLE TO LIMIT PUBLIC CONTENTION SURROUNDING
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 09842 010744Z

THIS CONTROVERSY. OFFICIAL, WHO HAD DISCUSSED ISSUE WITH
KOREAN MOFA DURING RECENT UNPUBLICIZED TRIP TO SEOUL,
SAID BOTH GOVERNMENTS RECOGNIZED NEED TO MOVE QUICKLY TO
DEFUSE IMMEDIATE FISHING CONTROVERSY WITHOUT PREJUDICING
EITHER SIDE'S LEGAL CLAIMS. AS RESULT, KOREAN PATROL
BOATS REPORTEDLY HAD DISAPPEARED FROM WATERS SURROUNDING
DISPUTED ISLAND, WHILE JAPANESE FISHING BOATS HAD

CONSISTENTLY REMAINED BEYOND 5-MILE RANGE OF ROK RADAR ON ISLAND.

3. MOFA OFFICIAL HAD CONSIDERABLE PRAISE FOR ROKG HANDLING OF INCIDENT, REFLECTING SEOUL'S SENSITIVITY TO CURRENT STATE OF DIET DELIBERATIONS ON CONTINENTAL SHELF LEGISLATION. ON JAPANESE SIDE, DIETMEN REPRESENTING TOTTORI PREFECTURE OPPOSITE TAKESHIMA HAD ALSO BEEN HELPFUL; THEY TOO HAD VISITED SEOUL AND UPON RETURNING HAD COUNSELED LOCAL FISHERMEN AGAINST UNNECESSARILY PROVOKING KOREANS.

4. AS FOR CONTINENTAL SHELF LEGISLATION ITSELF, OFFICIAL ECHOED RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC LINE EXPRESSED RECENTLY BY LDP DIETMEN (REF B). HE FELT THAT COMMITMENT BY LDP LEADERSHIP TO SECURE PASSAGE, WHILE NOT ASSURING SUCCESS, CERTAINLY TIPPED BALANCE IN THAT DIRECTION. OPPOSITION PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVERS, PERHAPS INCLUDING SEVERAL-DAY BOYCOTT WHEN BILL IS REPORTED OUT OF COMMITTEE AROUND JUNE 6-8, COULD POSE SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS, BUT MOFA VIEW WAS THAT THESE WOULD BE OVERCOME. KOREAN EMBASSY DCM, WHO HAS BEEN FOLLOWING LEGISLATION ASSIDUOUSLY AND WORKING BEHIND SCENES, CONFIRMED ABOVE PROGNOSIS TO POL COUNS AS INFORMED CONSENSUS VIEW HE HAS OBTAINED.
MANSFIELD

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